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OCT 18 1917 ✓

## THE GRAND CANYON OF THE COLORADO ✓

### SYNOPSIS OF FILM

1. Panoramic View of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado.
2. The Colorado River, a Mile Below the Canyon Rim.
3. Roadway Along the Rim with View of River Below.
4. Characteristic Scenes Along the Canyon.
5. The Canyon Walls from the Bright Angel Trail.
6. On the Trail to the River.

## THE COLORADO CANYON

**R**IVERS and smaller streams are great workers. They have accomplished wonderful things on the face of this old world of ours. They have worn down mountains, built plains under the ocean, filled up valleys, and dug deep canyons. Tireless, unconquerable, they have labored for ages and are still working ceaselessly, carving the surface of the earth into new forms.

"The rain falling in the plowed field forms rivulets in the furrows. The rivulets unite in a muddy torrent in the roadside gutter. With succeeding showers the gutter wears an ever-deepening channel in the soft soil. With the passing season the gutter becomes a gully. Here and there in places its banks undermine and fall in. Here and there the rivulets from the field wear tiny tributary gullies. Between the breaks in the banks and the tributaries, irregular masses of earth remain standing, sometimes resembling mimic cliffs, sometimes washed and worn into mimic peaks and spires.

"Such roadside erosion is familiar to us all. A hundred times we have idly noticed the fantastic, water-carved walls and minaretted slopes of these ditches. But seldom, perhaps, have we realized that the muddy roadside ditch and the great canyons of the world are, from nature's standpoint, identical; that they differ only in soil and size."

Of all the rivers of the world none has performed a more wonderful work than the Colorado. Let me tell you its story. In the southwest part of the United States there is a great plateau from four to eight thousand feet above sea level. "Here rain seldom falls, but in winter the snows lie heavy in the mountains. In the spring the snows melt

and the torrents of water wear temporary beds in the loose soils. Rivers are few and small. Some lose themselves in the drying sands. Others gather into a few desert water systems. The largest of these is that, which in its lower courses, bears the name of the Colorado River.

"In ages before history the Colorado River probably flowed upon the surface of this lofty tableland. But, like the roadside ditch, it gradually wore an ever-deepening channel. In time, as with the roadside ditch, the banks caved in and the current carried the soil away. Seismic disturbances may have helped. The ever-busy chisels of the untiring winds have carved and polished through untold centuries.

"The Colorado River is formed in southern Utah by the confluence of the Grand and Green rivers. The Grand drains the western Rockies in Colorado. The Green rises in northern Utah and drains also a corner of Wyoming. Together they gather the waters of three hundred thousand square miles of mountains. 'Ten million cascade brooks,' writes J. W. Powell, 'unite to form a hundred rivers beset with cataracts; a hundred roaring rivers unite to form the Colorado, a mad turbid stream.'

"To-day the Colorado flows through a series of self-dug canyons hundreds of miles long, a mile deep, and in some places a score of miles across the top. The sides of these canyons are carved and fretted beyond description, almost beyond belief; and the strata of rock and soil exposed by the river's excavations are marvelously colored. The blues and grays and mauves and reds are second in glory only to the canyon's size and sculpture. That portion of the canyon which is situated in northeastern Arizona has been set aside by Congress as a national monument."

The Indians tell an interesting legend of the origin of the canyon. The wife of a great chief had died. The chief mourned her loss and could not be comforted. One of the

Indian gods appeared to him and told him that his wife had gone to a happier land to which he might go if, upon his return, he would cease to mourn. The god then made a trail through the mountains that guarded the heavenly land and took the chief to his wife. This trail was the canyon of the Colorado. When the travelers returned from their wonderful journey the god made the chief promise that he would tell no one of its beauties lest others should wish to go there. Then the god turned a river into the canyon, a turbulent mighty stream, that should prevent any one from passing through. This guardian river was the Colorado.

To try to describe the Colorado Canyon is to attempt the impossible. It is too great, too wonderful. It is not a gorge, it is a tremendous gash in the face of the earth. It is not a canyon, it is a series of canyons. Into this great opening, hundreds of miles long and a mile deep, the whole White Mountain Range might be thrown without filling the gap to any appreciable extent. Some one has spoken of the canyon as a sunken landscape into which one could easily put the Yosemite and Yellowstone canyons, the pyramids of Egypt, and the city of Chicago, and yet make but a very small beginning toward filling up the great gash. The writer who said that the Grand Canyon could put a dozen Yosemites into its vest pocket gave a striking comparison of its size compared with the wonderland of California. It seems hardly possible to believe that a river could accomplish any such stupendous carving with the soil carried along in its waters as its only cutting tool. What ages of time must have elapsed while the waters were slowly hewing out these masses of rock thousands of feet thick into the labyrinth of gorges included in the "Grand Canyon of the Colorado."

The air of the region is so clear and dry that distances are deceptive. Standing on the rim, the opposite side of the



canyon appears not far off. The width is really stupendous, varying in places from ten to twenty miles. A bird apparently about the size of a swallow floats in the air far below us. A swallow at that distance would be invisible. The bird is really a large eagle. The Colorado River, a foaming, dashing torrent, looks from the edge of the canyon like a small silver thread. The actual vertical distance from the rim to the river is a mile, but to reach the stream one must travel on horseback several miles down a steep, zigzagging trail. The trip down and back takes a day, and a "tenderfoot" pays for the experience in aching joints and lame muscles.

There are only a few trails by which one can descend into the depths of the canyon. Bright Angel Trail is perhaps the easiest, though to most visitors this trip is a strenuous one. From the hotel on the rim, the distance down to the river by this trail is about seven miles. Part of the way the path is very narrow and steep and zigzags back and forth at a terrifying pitch. The horses are very intelligent and if left free to guide themselves will carefully pick the safest footing in the precipitous descent so that accidents are rare.

The trip down affords wonderful views. As one descends, the cliffs rise higher and higher. The pillared rocks, hundreds of feet high, carved out by the water, rise all around like towers, cathedrals, and castles, each one a mountain in itself, yet lost in the immensity of the stupendous cleft in which it stands with thousands of others. Among these giants Mt. Washington would be indistinguishable except perhaps by its dark covering, somber indeed beside the gayer walls of reds, pinks and yellows of the canyon's mountains.

Many tourists who have only a short stay at the canyon prefer to spend their time in admiring the views from different points on the rim rather than in making the trip down to the river. No two views are alike. No view is the same

at different times. The colors change with every changing hour. The morning and evening mists and clouds and shadows alter the landscape with every breeze that blows.

"No one can know the canyon for what it is who has not lived with it for every day of the year. It is like a mountain range—a cloud to-day, a wall of marble to-morrow. When the light falls into it, harsh, direct and searching, it is great, but not beautiful. The lines are chaotic, disturbing—but wait! The clouds and the sunset, the moonrise and the storm will transform it into a splendor that no mountain range can surpass. Peaks will shift and glow, walls darken, crags take fire and gray-green mesas, dimly seen, take on the gleam of opalescent lakes of mountain water."

HAMLIN GARLAND.

"The Grand Canyon remains not the eighth but the first wonder of the world. It is more mysterious in its depth than are the Himalayas in their height."

J. C. VAN DYKE.

"Looking down more than half a mile into this fifteen-by-two-hundred-and-eighteen-mile paint pot, I continually ask: Is any fifty miles of Mother Earth that I have known as fearful, as full of glory, as full of God?"

JOAQUIN MILLER.

"Even the most superficial description of this enormous spectacle may not be put in words. The watcher upon the rim overlooks a thousand square miles of pyramids and minarets carved from the painted depths. Many miles away and more than a mile below the level of his feet he sees a tiny silver thread which he knows is the giant Colorado. He is numbed by the spectacle. At first he cannot comprehend it. There is no measure, nothing that the eye can grasp, the mind fathom."

R. S. YARD.

## QUESTIONS, TOPICS, SUGGESTIONS

1. After a rain, see if you can find a little brook carving its canyon. Find the brook system, the source, mouth, branches, delta plain and flood plain. Sketch this system.
2. On the map of the United States find similar parts of the Mississippi system. Sketch this system. Show the boundaries; the states included; the large cities situated on the main river and on its branches.
3. Sketch the states in the southwestern part of our country. Show the Colorado River; the Green and Grand rivers; the Colorado Canyon; the body of water that receives the Colorado River.
4. What rivers of the world that have cut canyons can you name and locate? That have built deltas?

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